

Message Text

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ACTION AID-59

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FM AMEMBASSY DAKAR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6978

INFO AMEMBASSY BANJUL UNN

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

UNCLAS DAKAR 2746

AFDROUGHT

EO 11652: NA

SUBJ: GOVT OF THE GAMBIA APPEAL TO DONORS

FOR DROUGHT ASSISTANCE

REF: STATE 103133

NIAMEY FOR INSP GEN TODD

FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF A LETTER ADDRESSED BY THE GAMBIA
HIGH COMMISSIONER IN SENEGAL TO EMBASSIES OF A NUMBER OF
COUNTRIES, INCLUDING USEMB, APPEALING FOR DROUGHT
ASSISTANCE IN THE FACE OF A STEADILY WORSENING SITUATION:
QUOTE AS I AM NOW IN POSSESSION OF THE LATEST SITUATION
REPORT ON THE SERIOUS EFFECT THE DROUGHT HAS HAD ON THE
GAMBIA, I QUOTE BELOW THE FULL TEXT WHICH AS YOU STUDY WOULD
REVEAL THAT IT SERIOUSLY AFFECTED EIGHTY PERCENT OF THE
POPULATION, PARTICULARLY IN THE RURAL AREAS:

1. FOR FOOD AID, IT IS ESTIMATED 80 PER CENT OF THE POPULA-
TION OF 500,000 IN RURAL AREAS OF WHICH 200,000, IE 40-50
PERCENT SERIOUSLY AFFECTED BY DROUGHT AND FOR WHOM
IMMEDIATE FOOD ASSISTANCE REQUIRED.

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2. RE REMAINING 200,000, ALTHOUGH NOT AS ADVERSELY AFFECTED, WILL STILL NEED SOME ASSISTANCE TOO IN VIEW OF GENERAL SHORTAGE OF FOOD AND THE RISING PRICES FOR IMPORTED FOOD GRAINS, IE RICE.

3. OUR DECLARATION AT COMITE INTER-ETAT POUR LA LUTTE CONTRE LA SECHERESSE DANS LE SAHEL (CILSS) MEETING LAST YEAR OF OUR NEED FOR 10,000 TONS OF CEREAL GRAINS WAS BASED ON OLD POPULATION FIGURES.

4. LOCAL PRODUCTION OF CEREAL GRAINS ESTIMATED TO HAVE DROPPED BY 58 PER CENT. RICE PRODUCTION DROPPED FROM 30,000 TONS (NORMAL YEAR) TO 21,000 TONS (LAST YEAR), SORGHUM AND MILLET FROM 25,000 TONS (NORMAL YEAR) TO 15,000 TONS (LAST YEAR). THE SHORTFALL IN CROP PRODUCTION LAST YEAR IS APPROXIMATELY 19,000 TONS OF CEREAL GRAINS. 7,000 TONS REQUESTED FROM OTHER SOURCES, EG WORLD FOOD PROGRAM, BUT RESPONSE FROM THIS SOURCE NOT FAVORABLE, AS ONLY 2,000 TONS HAVE BEEN PROMISED.

5. OUR IMMEDIATE REQUIREMENTS - 13,000 TONS CEREAL GRAINS AND 3,000 TONS OILS/FATS.

THEREFORE, FROM THE FOREGOING, I MAKE APPEAL FOR SERIOUS CONSIDERATION AND IMMEDIATE BILATERAL ASSISTANCE TO AID THE SITUATION WHICH IF DELAYED WITH THE APPROACH OF THE RAINY SEASON, CONDITIONS ARE BOUND TO BE MORE ACUTE ONCE THE RAINS SET IN.

I TRUST YOU WOULD LEND A SYMPATHETIC EAR TO THIS SERIOUS APPEAL. UNQUOTE. SIGNED, S.J.O. SARR.

FFPO HAS SO FAR BEEN UNABLE TO ASSESS THE RESPONSE WHICH THIS APPEAL HAS ELICITED FROM ADDRESSEES. HOWEVER, HIS PREVIOUS (TWO) FIELD REPORTS ON THE GAMBIA POINT TO A DETERIORATING SITUATION WHICH HAS FINALLY CULMINATED IN AN OFFICIAL APPEAL TO A NUMBER OF POTENTIAL DONOR COUNTRIES AND AGENCIES FOR EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE. AGGREY

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